Research Paper

Research on the implementation mechanism and path of urban informal community renewal in China

Inclusive renewal for "new citizens"

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Abstract

In the process of rapid urbanization in China, due to the dual structure of urban and rural areas and the substantial increase in floating population, informal communities have become an important area for urban stock governance. control. The issue of urban living has been to the fore in recent years. Additionally, relatively helpless "new citizens" are now being favored by public policies. From the perspective of "new citizens", this essay studies the reasonable positioning of informal communities in the city and promotes the indiscriminate integration of "new citizens" and informal communities into social life and urban space. This will help to lessen several social issues brought on by residential differentiation and spatial incongruity. This paper points out that the current renewal has problems such as denying informality, excluding the floating population, and ignoring public interests. people. To create an inclusive regeneration path, community renewal should be paired with the creation of affordable rental housing for new residents. From the three aspects of system, space, and society, the inclusive path includes clarifying the role of government in the renewal process, ensuring the reasonable supply of public resources, and encouraging diverse participation in collaborative renewal. It is expected to lay a foundation for realizing the diversified governance goals of coordinated urban development.

Keywords

Informal community, Community renewal, New citizens, Inclusion, Informality, Informal housing

1. Introduction

The term "informal" is derived from the informal sector, an idea in economics initially put forth by Hart in 1970. The International Labour Organization (ILO) described it as an unregistered firm in 1972, and it has three characteristics: not clearly distinguishing between business and family activities, having fewer than 10 people, and concealing financial status (Zhang et al.,2016; Hark,1973). This concept has since been replaced by the informal economy, with more emphasis on whether the forms of production and distribution are regulated. It doesn't stand for marginalization and poverty, and it doesn't symbolize the black market (Chen,2019). Scholars also study urban informal phenomena including slums, informal housing, and informal settlements in addition to economic phenomena like the informal economy and



informal employment (Caroline et al.,2019). In addition to playing a significant role in nations and regions that are rapidly urbanizing, informality is also prevalent in developed countries and is really on the rise (Vinit et al.,2019). In recent years, relevant studies on the phenomenon of mobile vendors, urban villages, and informal construction in traditionally residential regions have recently been carried out by Chinese academics.

Informal living is widespread in Chinese big cities, and the majority of tenants live in these communities. Lianjia Real Estate figures from 2016 show that 11 million of the 16 million tenants in Shenzhen live in urban villages. The urban housing system is under pressure due to the swift growth of migrant and floating populations, and informal communities have emerged as a crucial support structure. In response to the migrant population in the city, Xi'an proposed the idea of "new citizens" in 2004, which has since been extensively adopted in other cities. According to "the Key Tasks of New Urbanization Construction in 2019," China has around 300 million "new citizens," who fall into three categories: migrant agricultural population, migrant employment-population between cities, graduates of colleges, and vocational schools. These people are the main groups who rent informal housing. To ensure that new citizens have the same rights as registered residents, China has started to safeguard them through public policies that cover things like housing, financial services, and medical insurance.

urban renewal is a major development strategy during the 14th Five-Year Plan period in China, the informal community renewal practice has evolved from straightforward demolition and construction to multi-renewal governance (Zhao,2016), but the majority of multi-participation practices disregard the new citizens. This paper hopes to decrease social issues brought on by residential differences and spatial mismatch, as well as to integrate new citizens and informal communities into the city without distinction. It also explores the future development and inclusive renewal paths of informal communities by analyzing the sources and current situation of informal communities in China and researching related practices. It contributes to the development of urban regeneration and serves as a resource for the development of community governance and housing security policies.

2. New citizens and informal community

2.1. Informal communities in China

The 1980s urban housing reform in China led to the creation of informal communities. This reform made individuals need to solve their housing needs by purchasing or renting. The nation has established many housing categories according to the type of occupants, including resettlement housing, public housing, unit welfare housing, affordable housing, and commercial housing. commercial housing. Since the commercial housing policy was completely implemented in 2003, the price of commercial real estate has skyrocketed in many cities, and the rigid regulation of qualifications has widened the housing gap between urban and rural areas. To stabilize home prices, China has gradually implemented measures like the "Eight National Regulations", "National Six Regulations", "New National Ten Regulations", "New National Eight Regulations", and "New National Six Regulations" to stabilize housing prices. However, the cost of commercial housing in major cities is still very high, making it difficult for "new citizens" to find housing. In general, China's rapid expansion of urban land, inadequate macro-government oversight, inconsistencies in land ownership, and deficiencies in rural self-management are the main causes of informal communities (Tian,1998). The dual structure of urban and rural areas and the pursuit of interests by villagers have been used by scholars to summarize it (Ye et al.,2020).



In this process, informal communities have developed features such as dense population, ambiguous property rights, average environmental quality, and difficulty in renewal and renovation in response to the housing demands of new citizens. Many members of the floating population are unable to apply for inexpensive housing and are unable to afford expensive commercial housing because of the restriction of the household registration system. As a result, people are compelled to select informal living spaces including urban villages, large courtyards, and basements (Chen,2019). At this stage, the government had a certain degree of vacancy in housing security and resettlement, and the city voluntarily supplemented it with informal housing. It is clear that the dual structure between urban and rural areas is where informal communities first emerge, the pursuit of interests by villagers in urban villages and the housing demands of new citizens are the factors that promote the current characteristics of informal communities.

2.2. Address informal communities in cities

Urban villages are the embryonic form of informal communities. A negative attitude toward the existence of informal communities was present in the early rehabilitation of urban villages, which frequently involved demolition and reconstruction or the development of new real estate. This method has indeed brought economic benefits and reshaped the landscape, but it has also caused a problem: the excessive pursuit of economic interests at the expense of public interests. Within the scope of cities, informality is not a bad thing, it results from formal structures. Roy, A. views it as an urbanization model and a method of urban organization. Yiftachel, O. believes it to be the tactics and methods of government, in a manageable urban area. Informality ensures the diversity and stability of cities. In terms of employment, housing, and social stability, the rich and significant informal economy offers flexible development space for urbanization in Chinese cities(Ye,2020).

In terms of the housing market, public services, and informal employment, informal communities provide a complement to urban formal communities. According to statistics, in Chinese megacities, the percentage of unregistered permanent inhabitants in urban villages ranges from roughly 45%-75% (Figure 1) (Tian,2019). These people work in a variety of industries throughout the city and contribute to development. Under the circumstance that affordable housing is actively built but it is difficult to achieve full coverage, the governments should change their minds and accept the positive role of informal communities. They can define the proper positioning of informal communities in the city, play up their complementary advantages, and encourage the coexistence and co-prosperity of informal and formal communities.

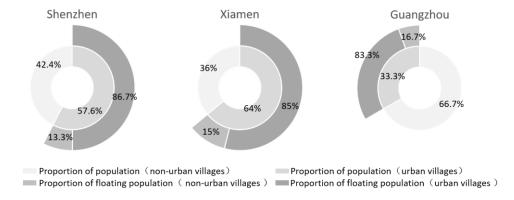


Figure 1. The percentage of urban villages and floating population in big cities. Source: authors make use of references (Zhang, 2022; Ye, 2015).

2.3. Renewal of informal community for new citizens

In informal settlements, "new citizens" make up most of the population. However, it has been an excluded fourth-party subject for the previous few decades. Before 2008, Chinese urban planning scholars tended to focus on the phenomena of informal living in urban villages and rarely employed the notion of informality. The study of urban villages has been broken down into three stages: the analysis stage of the connotation and formation mechanism; the research stage of the reconstruction mode based on the coordination and conflict among the government, developers, and villagers; the research stage of inclusive renewal on advocating diversified governance, independent update, micro update, and other forms. (Zhang&Ye,2022). Even though the second stage of the research demanded migrant workers be given consideration, most of the construction models excluded the floating population (Ye,2015). However, some scholars believe that urban village renewal and housing of new citizens are twin problems, but existing academic research and practical exploration mostly separate the two (Tian,1998).

Housing for new citizens and challenges with informal communities are interconnected problems. Urban regeneration is a significant growth strategy in China, and the two sessions in 2022 will focus heavily on it. Informal community renewal has to be further researched, investigated, and used as a renewal project with a theory that is still in its infancy and a system that is still in its inadequacies. The collective construction land in the village can be used to build rental housing, according to the "Pilot Plan for Using Collective Construction Land to Build Rental Housing," which was suggested in 2017. This opened up new avenues for institutionally housing new citizens. In September 2017, the use of collective construction land for the development of rental housing was officially launched in 13 pilot cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, by the Ministry of Land and Resources. The combination of informal community renewal and the housing shortage of new citizens may break the bottleneck of development and lead to a breakthrough in the promotion of new urbanization. A city is a city for the people, and as informal communities are revitalized, the rights and interests of new citizens should be taken into consideration.

3. Relevant research and experience of informal community renewal

3.1. Relevant experience in developed countries

Urban informality is gradually becoming more prevalent in Europe and the United States as a result of changing neoliberal policies and the effects of immigrant waves (Slavnic,2010). This essay chooses the relevant practices of the United States and Singapore for research and draws lessons from them that China might apply to its practices.

3.1.1. Inclusionary housing program in America

The Inclusionary Housing Program has been embraced by many governments as the primary strategy to address the issue of housing security because of its benefits, including a high level of marketization and flexible operation (Yi,2019). The government is in charge of the plan and uses a range of legal policies to ensure the indiscriminate integration of affordable housing and regular commercial housing. Additionally, the government uses financial resources to create incentive policies and collaborate with developers to promote the development of residential areas (Yi,2019; Gu,2021). The complementing measures of rigidity and elasticity are among them, and all parties are urged to implement them by the government's desires (Figure 2). Local regulations, permits, and legally binding master plans— as well as affordable housing— are frequently used to carry out the strict policy. Flexibility policy is usually a process in which districts give developers more flexibility (Gu,2021), including flexible implementation policies and



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incentive policies (Table 1). In order to promote a diverse supply of mixed land for different income levels and simultaneously address social issues, a number of methods are combined.

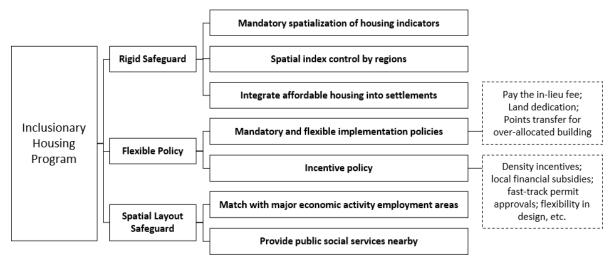


Figure 2. Safeguard framework for Inclusionary housing program. Source: authors draw from reference (Gu et al., 2021).

Table 1. Density gradient reward table in West Hollywood, Los Angeles, USA. Source: authors draw from reference (Wiener& Barton, 2014).

Affordable Unit Type	Minimum % of Affordable Units	Density Bonus Granted	Additional Bonus for each 1% Increase in Affordable
Very Low Income	5%	20%	2.5%
Low Income	10%	20%	1.5%
Moderate Income	10%	5%	1%

3.1.2. The public housing system in Singapore

The public housing system in Singapore, which had similar housing issues to China as early as the 1980s, is viewed as a model for resolving contemporary housing issues (Li,2012). In order to maintain the profitability of public housing, the government launched three programs: "the main upgrading program", "neighborhood renewal program" (NRP), and "remaking our heartland program" to ensure the viability of public housing. The three programs are completely government-led, the top-level design of the government is the key support, and the participatory renewal system and project funding guarantee are the necessary conditions for renewal. First and foremost, the planning has a centralized, unified operating system and formulates construction goals that consider local conditions. it has a complete system, and residents' rights to information and free speech are given top priority (Li,2021). Third, it has a continuous financial guarantee. The central provident fund and refinancing of real estate mortgage loans are how the government launches the renewal plan, which combines the introduction of social capital and the provision of resident-funded projects (Li.2012; Li,2021). A sound system and an integrated implementation path are advantageous to the implementation of renewal.

3.2. Relevant experience and research in developing countries

In regions like South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, informal communities are now a significant source of housing. it is typically characterized by factors like self-built dwellings, poor services, and low resident



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income (Lombard,2014), related research mostly focuses on the physical environment and land ownership (Xu&Chen,2018). To draw inspiration from them, this study chooses pertinent practices and studies from Ghana, Brazil, and China to explore.

3.2.1. Update on informal settlements in Africa, Latin America, and other countries

In the global academic community, this is where the majority of research on informal phenomena is centered. These informal settlements are frequently referred to as slums or self-help housing. They exhibit the traits of hazy property rights and both positive and negative impacts. In the renovation of the settlement, it is worth noting the idea of public participation and the integration of informality and formality. Well-known international organizations as well as regional grassroots organizations are among the third parties engaging in the renewal. Some non-governmental organizations with an international background, such as the World Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development, have collaborated with governments to promote the update (Li& Alex,2019). At the same time, the neighborhood establishes neighborhood groups and grassroots organizations to maintain its influence and advance local governance (Han,2018). The Participatory Budget, which in Brazil transfers decision-making power over the capital expenditure portion of the municipal budget from the City Council to public assemblies, is also a kind of public participation. In addition, Rio put forward a new idea of reasonably and effectively "connecting" urban informality and formality in the "slum-block" ("Favelas-Bairro") program (Li&Alex,2019). All of these aim to rationally situate urban informality at the institutional and spatial levels.

3.2.2. Relevant practice and research in Taiwan, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou, China

The urban land replanning program is a systematic, all-encompassing approach to land reconstruction in Taiwan for urban renewal. The benefit is that different public facilities can be built without the government having to spend money on them. The specific strategy is to encourage landowners in the rezoned regions to sell their land, and the replanning agency will plan and arrange according to the law. The rezoned land will be fairly distributed to the original owner, who will construct it with the assumption that the plan is followed, on the premise that the area will be kept for public facilities (Figure 3) (Ana,2016). This approach enables the logical building of public infrastructure.

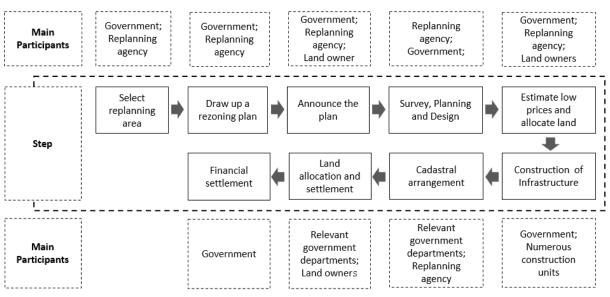


Figure 3. Steps of urban land replanning program. Source: authors draw from references (Ana,2016; Zhang,2009).

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Both urban regeneration and the preparation of the land stock are considered in the cooperative rehabilitation of the urban village in Shenzhen. It is committed to sharing the benefits of land development and incorporating the renovation of urban villages into legal management. Its traits include the government's primary directing role, a diversity of implementation subjects, voluntary applications, and the contribution of property owners to public space (Ye,2015). To consider the renewal of new citizens and informal communities, Ye Yumin proposed a "2242" affordable healthy housing program after conducting field research and calculations in Guangzhou (Table 2) (Ye,2020; Roy,2005). This strategy meets the needs of new citizens while also considering resident interests and making use of the available land, but it necessitates a flawless top-level design and varied market-oriented cooperation.

Table 2. "2242" affordable healthy housing program. Source: authors draw from reference (Ye,2020).

The Income Level of New Citizens	% of this Income	Options for Affordable Housing	
High Income	20%	Buy or Rent Housing in the Market	
Low and Middle	20%	Live in the Dormitory of the Enterprise or Development Zone	
Income	40%	Affordable and Healthy Rental Housing from Inclusive Renewal of Urban Village	
Minimum Income	20%	Public Housing Provided by the Government	

3.3. Summary

Research on worldwide informal communities frequently co-occurs with topics including housing security, urban renewal, and land use. The United States and Europe, for example, have more comprehensive institutions and a range of governance practices. While the physical environment and infrastructure repair and rebuilding are the primary concerns in developing countries, land and property rights for housing are also major concerns (Table 3).

Table 3. Relevant research and practical experience. Source: created by the authors.

Country / Region	Renewal Project	Participating Subject	Target	Experience Worth Learning
America	Inclusive housing program (Inclusive zoning)	State government;	Manage the market's externalities for commercial	Mandatory law, legally binding master plans, and flexible implementation policies; Effective combination of rigid regulations and elastic policies
		Regional government;	housing, and reduce the difference between homes;	
		Developer;	Increase the affordability of housing for families with low and middle incomes; Share the benefits of land appreciation	
		Operating agency of		
		affordable housing		
Singapore	The main upgrading program; Neighborhood renewal program; Remaking our heartland program	HDB;	Improve the living environment and enhance the quality of the	Perfect system and operation mechanism;
		Grassroots	community;	,
		organization of the community;	Maintain community relations and promote neighborhood integration;	Strong participation of residents; Strict access and exit mechanisms of affordable housing
		Resident;		
		Market	Ensure sustainability and demonstrate identity	



			Government;		
Ghana		Community Autonomy	NGO;	Improve the physical environment;	Community self-governance
			Local community organization;	Maintain their rights, prevent marginalization or identified as illegalization	and active participation of local NGOs
			Resident		
Janei Brazil	Rio de	Slum- Block(Favelas- bairro); Resettlement of Rio People (Morar carioca)	Government; Resident	Slums are integrated into formal cities and retain their local characters	The idea of in situ regeneration that "connects" urban informality and formality;
	Janeiro		association; Resident		Coordination and communication of residents associations
	Porto	Participatory Budget	Government; Planner;	Participatory planning; Complete reasonable allocation of resource	Residents have a certain right to make decisions about the renovation budget;
	Alegie		Resident representative		Targeted solutions for diverse housing problems
- China	Tairren	Urban land replanning program	Government; Land owner;	Promote the development and reuse of land, and solve many social problems such as housing, public facilities, employment	The construction of public facilities is given priority;
	Taiwan		Replanning agency		Reduce fiscal expenditure by incentivizing owners
	Shenzh en	Cooperative Renovation of Urban Village	Government; District government;	Improve urban renewal; Realize the sharing of land development benefits	Flexible multi-agent participation model;
			Market;		Property owner provides public space
			Villager		
	Guang zhou	"2242" Affordable healthy housing program	Government; Villager; Market	Jointly solve urban village renewal and new citizen housing problems	Solutions for utilizing urban stocks

The renewal of informal community is a complex process involving both spatial and social issues. Practical experience demonstrates that the majority of changes are driven by the government. An essential condition for the proper implementation of the renewal is understanding how to balance coercion and guidance. A sound system, operation mechanism, and reasonable pluralistic participation can promote the healthy operation of the update. The renewal of informal communities will have some impact on urban growth in China. The renewal and the housing of new citizens are issues that can be resolved jointly, and the collaborative participation of new citizens in the renewal may find new possibilities for the development of informal communities.

4. Inclusive renewal mechanism and path of informal community for new citizens

Diversity in institutions and society at all levels is also reflected in inclusiveness. At this point, the goal of renewal is not to eradicate informality but rather to actualize the coexistence and prosperity of informal



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and formal communities, as well as new citizens and residents. This essay holds that in order to attain this goal, we must begin with three factors: top-level design of government, supply of public resources, and mechanism of collaborative participation (Figure 4).

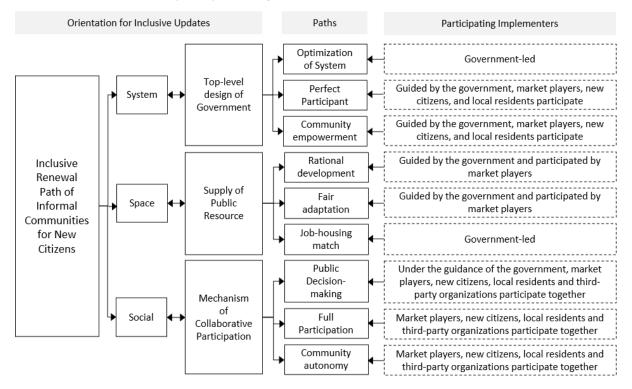


Figure 4. Inclusive renewal framework of informal community for new citizens. Source: created by the authors.

4.1. Inclusive system: A reasonable distinction between the leading and guiding roles of the government

4.1.1. System optimization

It takes many different interest groups to update and transform informal communities, which is a complicated process. It necessitates that the government take on a comprehensive role, set up a focused, ongoing system of renewal, and shift from exclusive renewal to inclusive growth. The entire transformation process should be strongly under the supervision of the government, which should also create all applicable rules and regulations and design the entire process. The government also scientifically and reasonably put out mandatory indicators including affordable rental housing and public facilities, as well as suggestive indicators that are conducive to public improvement. At the same time, policies for rewards and penalties are set up, and governance of renewal will be standardize.

4.1.2. Perfect participant

In order to accommodate the complex urban situations, the government should have considerable latitude in how the update is specifically implemented. First of all, the government should take part in the entire process of the work, the provincial and municipal governments should draft papers with legal force, and the lower-level district government and various subjects should finish the specific implementation. Second, the government should complete the diversification of roles and the creation of numerous flexible modes of update, such as the free combination of diverse subjects including new citizens. Finally,



to enable grassroots self-governance, the government should encourage community involvement and empowerment and set aside a specific development area for NGOs and community organizations.

4.1.3. Community empowerment

The update of communities is not a fixed pattern but a continuous process(Zhu et al.,2021) Sustainable renewal is more prone to market-oriented operation and creates a multi-competitive mechanism, it is not dependent on the direction of government and financial funds. The provision of cheap rental housing and the implementation of informal community renewal are two interrelated aspects of the free market for such renewal. The implementation process of renewal and subsequent development are all decided by the market and residents. The government controls and supervises the process and price as necessary, breaks the previous pattern of developers occupying the main voice, and establishes a healthy renewal mechanism.

4.2. Inclusive space: Meeting the needs of new citizens in the supply of public resources

4.2.1. Rational development

To ensure the rational allocation of stock land space resources in the renewal of informal communities, the primary problem is not to solve property rights, but to ensure the safe and stable operation of informal communities. When creating plans, the government must undertake thorough plans and projections in order to include new citizens. The government must also plan the scope of affordable rental housing and accompanying public services in light of the current circumstances. It is essential to guarantee strict control over capital construction indicators, flexible control over indicators that may be applied in a variety of ways, establish mechanisms for indicator incentives and transfers, and promote development behaviors. They can achieve spatial structure optimization, multi-group integration, and social stratification eradication.

4.2.2. Fair adaptation

The status quo of informal communities is often accompanied by low quality. Infrastructure development is a never-ending endeavor. Additionally, all members of the community should have equal access to public resources that guarantee a high standard of living. Different groups can integrate socially in mature public spaces. Since the market naturally shapes public service facilities in many residential areas as they develop over time, it is necessary to make an update to set aside a specific location for them. Due to the high density and low income in informal communities, it is necessary to moderately intervene in the coordination of public transportation resources to guarantee that the varying requirements of various groups are addressed.

4.2.3. Job-housing match

Inclusive updates of informal communities should consider job-residential relationships. The marginalization of new residents, which results in a mismatch in the employment landscape and an imbalance in the relationship between jobs and housing, is a significant issue with the independent building of affordable rental housing. Therefore, it is reasonable that the renewal of informal communities includes the construction of rental housing that new citizens can pay for, and the renewal can also use industrial land to reserve space for the development of new industries, providing the possibility for employment and entrepreneurship. Additionally, rehabilitation should control the unfavorable behaviors of residents rather than eradicate the informal economic space on which some of them rely. It helps new citizens make the transition from satisfying the right of residence to obtaining the right to development.



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4.3. Social Inclusion: Establishing a renewal mechanism of collaborative participation including new citizens

4.3.1. Public decision-making

The academic community has agreed to implement inclusive renewal collaboratively with the involvement of many different subjects. In the past, it was difficult for most residents to influence the decision of renewal, because residents were objectively in a position where their interests were damaged(Chen et al.,2022). Therefore, inclusive renewal should incorporate social justice and environmental equity into the implementations, and play the main role of residents in various implementation and participation modes. Public decision-making and public governance are jointly carried out through the participatory platform and community planner system to promote the effective combination of urban planning and public participation, after which public participation can complete modern and sustainable transformation.

4.3.2. Full participation

The collaborative regeneration of multi-participation should draw new citizens as the primary body of decision-making as it is the main group of rental informal communities. Assuring the rights and interests of new citizens to participate in the project's initiation stage and decision-making stage, it should split the viewpoints of property rights and tenants in the participating groups so that new citizens can become equal cooperative participants. Through expert technology sinking, a field implementation model of multi-participation decision-making may be created, which the inhabitants will maintain and run independently. Establishing win-win cooperation between various subjects while taking into account the private interests of property owners and the public interests of new residents.

4.3.3. Community autonomy

Renewal necessitates the informal community to have a certain level of self-governance because it is a complicated and ongoing process. At this point, third-party organizations or community planners can be introduced to guide the awakening of rights awareness among residents, including new citizens, and assist in the establishment of a collaborative mechanism for multi-participation. There are already some third-party organizations in China that have played an active role in participating in the renewal practice, such as the Four-leaf Clover Hall in Shanghai and the Big Fish Community Creation and Development Center. At the same time, residents are urged to voluntarily form community associations, take part in multiparty communication on behalf of residents' interests, and collaborate with other groups to further the self-governance of residents.

5. Conclusion

It is impossible to disregard the significance and potential of informal communities as enrichment and complement to the sustainable development of urban housing and community construction. The process of informal community rejuvenation is ongoing, and in the course of exploration, a full system must be put in place. Inclusive renewal for new citizens means using urban stock to solve the two major problems of community update and housing issues for new citizens at the same time. Due to the location of informal communities and the background of many residents renting, China has proposed the notion of using the existing property for the building of affordable housing, making it the top option for this type of housing. The most important and challenging component of the implementation of renewal is creating a standardized market-oriented process, which calls for support and collaboration from many different



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angles. Even while planning alone cannot address the urban issues brought on by the new residents, it is difficult for the renewal to go healthily and consistently without taking the new citizens into account. Assisting in the implementation of truly people-centered urbanization, inclusive planning should address issues with spatial and social governance, and take legal residency and healthy living of new citizens into consideration throughout the entire process of renewal and rebuilding.

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